

Foster Parents

Changing Lives One Child at a Time

July 2005



*"Take care of the children
and they will take care of the future."*

– Former Gov. Mike Lowry

Join the 200 people on the Foster Parents LISTSERV®

<http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1>

Check out the Foster Parent Web site:

<http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

For all of you who are taking care of the future by taking care of children, thank you.

Helping Each Other

While you help take care of children, Children's Administration is working to help take care of you.

Support Services: You can get united with other foster parents through a hub, a buddy system or support group. Families For Kids (FFK) has a contract to build such networks in all parts of the state but Kitsap and Pierce Counties. The Foster Care Resource Network (FCRN) is doing the same work there. Foster parenting is work where support is needed frequently. Talking to people who are walking in your shoes can make the job seem less daunting. Call FFK at 888-794-1794 or FCRN at 253-677-8122 to learn about how to get united with other foster parents. The detailed Families for Kids web site is www.familiesforkids.org.

FPAWS: Another organization that advocates for your needs and works with other foster parent organizations around the country is the Foster Parents Association of Washington State. FPAWS has reorganized under new leadership and is looking for people to help bring energy to the task of supporting and advocating for foster parents. If you have ideas or want to join FPAWS, call 360-754-3953. FPAWS also has a support line for information, referral and help, 1-800-391-CARE (2273) and a detailed, easy-to-use web site: www.fpaws.org. You can find considerable information on the site, including a list of local foster parent organizations around the state.

Support Line: A new support line is in place to help you handle difficult emotional or behavioral issues with your child or children when the child's social worker is not available. Between 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. on weekdays and 24 hours a day on weekends and holidays, call 1-800-301-1868 to talk to a trained social worker.

FIRST Line: Children in care sometimes make allegations of mistreatment or there are issues of licensing violations against foster parents. During the stressful period when allegations are investigated, foster parents can use the objective voice of someone who understands them and what they are going through. Call 253-219-6782 and you will be offered assistance and advice.

Foster Care Month: Sometimes the simplest thing to do – and the most appreciated, is to say thank you. During Foster Care Month in May, many events were held throughout the state to do just that, say thank you. State staff members worked with community partners across the state on dozens of events that showed how much foster parents are appreciated. To learn more about what occurred, please click on the web site: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>.

Trainings: Also on the foster parent web site listed above, you can check out upcoming foster parent trainings in your part of the state. Training is one of the most important services offered to help you better take care of the children in your care. Click on the foster parent web site, find "trainings" and click on the region where you live.

List Serve: Another way of communicating more to you is through the list serve:

<http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1>.

About 200 people have joined. We will keep you updated on issues and activities important to you.

Appreciation Station: The Vancouver and Port Angeles offices of Children's Administration have set up space and supplies for social workers to quickly send thank you notes to foster parents – called Appreciation Stations. Both state staff and FFK staff have had a hand in putting together the stations with cards, gel pens, stickers, etc. so social workers can fill out a card and have other staff send it out. If this proves successful, we hope to encourage the practice statewide.

Finally, please call or e-mail us if you have ideas, questions or concerns. At headquarters, you can contact Bob Partlow, 360-902-8063, email pbob300@dshs.wa.gov or David de la Fuente 360-9027976, email dedr300@dshs.wa.gov. If they can't help you, they will likely know who can.

The reimbursement rate for foster parents was increased in the 2005-07 state budget just passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Christine Gregoire.

The rate increase will be 1% on July 1, 2005 and 1% on July 1, 2006.

The Legislature also included about \$14.6 million to make improvements in the foster care system to include more face-to-face contact with children, more timely Child Protective Service investigations enhanced in-home child welfare services programs and education specialists.

Women, Infant, Child Help Available

Did you know that all foster children up to age 5 are eligible for services under WIC, the nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children? WIC supports foster families to help make sure kids get a healthy start in life.

The WIC program: checks on growth and gives ideas of feeding children; provides up to \$50 worth food monthly – the checks can be used to buy fluid milk, cheese, eggs, cold and hot cereals fruit juice, peanut butter, eggs, dried beans/peas and infant formula; and serves pregnant women and children up to 5.

You can get more information about WIC and other programs coordinated through the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Washington State at 1-800-322-2588 or at their web site: www.hmhb.org.

Clothing and Shoes Available for Kids

Thanks to a clothing and shoe drive by Sleep Country USA, more than 3,000 items of clothing and shoes for children in foster care and other children in need were collected. The items were donated by people throughout Washington and Oregon at Sleep Country stores through their Foster Care Project.

The items are being distributed through 13 agencies in the two states. If you have a specific need please visit http://www.sleepcountry.com/comm_charities.aspx to find the nearest location.

State Grieves Death of Foster Parents

Darrell and Sandra Knapp of Marysville, who were foster parents to more than 30 children and adopted five of them, were killed in an automobile accident on I-5 May 30. Also killed in the crash was their adopted six-year old son Noah.

The couple were foster parents from 1992-2004 and were much beloved in their community.

A memorial fund has been set up for the family. Contributions can be made at any U.S. Bank branch. The account number is 1535-5695-2759.